

## Grade 6 - Narrative

### Runaway Lamb

Jody trudged up the gravel driveway. I have so much to do before the 4-H Stock Show, she thought. She smiled when she pictured her lamb, Ebony, and hurried, anticipating Ebony's face poking over the fence to greet her. Where is she? Jody wondered when the little nose didn't appear. She tossed her backpack on the porch and rushed to the fenced-in pen. Jody frowned as she scanned the pen. There was no sign of the black lamb. Then Jody noticed the gate, which stood open wide like a gaping mouth.

Jody's stomach flip-flopped as she ran toward the back door of their house. "Mom!" she yelled, "Ebony is gone! Someone left the gate open!"

Her mother came to the door. "Maybe Bobby has Ebony. He came home from school a little while ago and went outside to play." Mom and Jody surveyed the yard, but there was no sign of six-year-old Bobby or the lamb.

"Bobby wants to help you get Ebony ready for the stock show. Why don't you look in the barn, and I'll be out there in a minute," said Mom.

Maybe Bobby put Ebony in her stall, Jody thought hopefully as she hurried toward the barn. Her hope turned to disappointment as she stared into the empty stall. As Jody stood there trying to figure out what to do next, she noticed something move behind a bale of hay and went to investigate.

Jody frowned as she pulled the bale aside and found Bobby sitting scrunched up with his knees tucked under his chin. "Come on out, Bobby," she demanded.

Bobby crawled out from behind the bale. "I forgot to close the gate after breakfast because I was late for school. I didn't think Ebony would escape," Bobby said tearfully. "I'm sorry, Jody."

"We have to find her fast!" said Jody. "The show is the day after tomorrow. I had Ebony cleaned and brushed. If she's out there—" Jody waved toward the field and woods beyond the barn, "she'll be full of burrs and thistles, and I'll have to start over." Jody sighed. "This is my first year in competition, and I want to do well."

Their mother entered the barn as Jody was speaking. She understood Jody's frustration, but she knew Bobby was sorry. She looked into her son's tear-stained face and asked, "Bobby, do you know where Ebony might be?"

Bobby grinned. "Sure, I bet I know where she is." "Where?" Jody asked impatiently. "How would you know?" "Ebony got out once before," reported Bobby, "and Dad and I found her down by the creek."

Jody, Bobby, and Mom trekked across an open field and soon were in the cool, shady woods. As they inspected fallen trees and hollow logs, they listened for sounds of the lamb. All they heard was the wind rustling through the trees and chirping birds. Jody began to worry about the lamb's safety, but she didn't want to further upset Bobby, so she kept her concerns to herself.

"Jody, do you think Ebony is okay?" Bobby asked quietly.

"I'm sure she's fine," Jody responded, "but she'll be a mess after her adventure in the woods."

Soon, they heard the gurgle of the stream splashing over rocks. When they reached the bank, Mom was the first to notice tiny hoof prints in the mud. "Ebony was here," Mom said, "but where did she go?"

Bobby knelt down in the mud, studying the ground. "Maybe we can follow her tracks." He stood up and pointed to the hoof prints that marched farther into the forest. "Dad showed me how."

Jody and Mom followed Bobby as he lost and found the prints again many times. Then Jody shouted, "Look Bobby, here they are again! They're headed toward the field."

Once in the open hay field, Jody spied her little black lamb trotting across the stubble. She jogged toward her and called, "Ebony, come here!"

Mom and Bobby were close behind. Bobby hugged the lamb and said, "Ebony, I promise I'll never leave the gate open again."

"Let's take Ebony home and get her cleaned up, Bobby," said Jody. "I'll need your help to get her ready for the stock show."

Jody, Bobby, and Mom started toward home with Ebony trotting behind them.